



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

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## ABSTRACT

Sustainable development as a concept called for bridging the gap between the conventional mode of development and the protection of the environment. It stood for Intergenerational equity whereby the needs of the present and the future generations are accomplished. The developed countries are mainly held responsible for the massive devastation of the environment due to indiscriminate use of the natural resources. There is a prevalent debate among the developed and developing countries about the protection of environment and maintenance of sustainable development. Maintaining the balance between environment and economic development is equally important. Various methods are being applied for maintaining sustainable development. The non state based actors play profoundly significant role in achieving the sustainable goals in the advent of globalization. The significant point is how the globalization process affects the protection of environment and development. The trade and environmental laws and their actual enforcement are the important aspects of concern.

**KEYWORDS:** Development, Ecological Security, Globalization, Supraterritorial, Intergenerational Equity

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development first emerged in the 1980s and this kind of development is much more different than conventional way of development. Sustainable development for the first time was launched in details in the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, the Brundtland Common Report in 1987 called 'Our Common Future' was published by former Norway Prime Minister Gro Hurlum Brundtland (Baker, 2006:6). According to Brundtland commission report, sustainable development is that development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising those of the future.

Sustainable development as a concept talks about Intergenerational equity (Baker, 2006:38). Indiscriminate use of resources led to various kinds of environmental degradation like global warming, acid rain, biodiversity loss. As a result of different strategies of development the focus was shifted to generation of profit or per capita GDP. The developed countries are responsible for higher consumption of energy and hence more environmental degradation (Baker, 2006:19).

### Sustainable development tries to continue development without harming the environment

Sustainable development as an idea tried to address the perennial issue of how we can continue the process of development without harming the environment. Sustainable development tries to bridge the gap between development and environment. (Sachs, 2015:20) The debate revolving around this started from the 1980s with the focus being whether sustainable development as a strategy will be able to sustain questions of environmental protection as well as carry out developmental concerns. After the publication of the Brundtland Commission in 1987, the entire idea of development became the focal point of debate at the 2nd Earth summit at Rio De Janeiro in Brazil, June 1992 (Baker, 2006:37). The first Earth summit was held in 1972 in Stockholm Conference where sustainable development issues were discussed among other environmental issues and it became the focal point between developing and developed countries.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earth summit in June 1992 the developing countries argued that if they continued to follow sustainable development plans then it will hamper their long term prospects of economic development. The implementation of sustainable development plans led to a serious problem. The developing countries need to be viewed in a different way from the developed countries and the model of advancement which the developed nations followed posed a grave problem for the developing countries to follow. The main principle of Agenda 21 is the common but differentiated responsibility of implementing sustainable development and environment protection of the economically backward countries. Environment is not given much importance by the conventional mode of development only economic growth is focused on.

The use of Green technology by the developed countries and the transfer of the techniques to the developing countries is a contested area (Pathak, Fulekar, Kale, 2014:3). The examples of protecting the environment can be the use of catalytic convertors in cars which lead to less car emissions and the implementation of car emissions norms like EURO 1, EURO 2, EURO 3, EURO 4 and introduction of electric cars and buses. Sustainability talks about saving resources for the future generation along with use of eco friendly products and the concept of recycling

which can be a good way of protecting the environment. (Fulekar, Kale, 2014: 5) The maintenance of the biosphere or the ecological habitat will actually lead to sustenance of the animal kind and mankind whereas the disruption of environment will affect the planet adversely (Sachs, 2015:42).

### Strategies for implementing sustainable development

The ways for sustainable development comprises the sources of conventional energy like fossil fuels or resources that is derived from underground and coal based thermal power but conventional sources are limited in nature and also degenerates the environment, alternate sources of power generation like solar power will be a better option. For instance the use of solar lights in the Eastern Metropolitan bypass in Kolkata will be a good example. In the coastal areas use of wind power and hydel power to generate electricity as non conventional renewable energy is a good way for protecting the environment. The use of biomass will be costly initially but utilization capacity is high and will be better strategy than others. As an alternative these sorts of development can prove to protect the environment in the long run and reduce dependency on conventional sources (Rogers, 2008:20). The sea level rise of the Arctic or Antarctic and melting of polar ice caps along with submergence of low lying areas of Sundarbans and the Maldives are caused due to environmental degradation.

Environmental security primarily means to peacefully reduce the different kinds of threats relating to environmental degradation which is harming human lives. For ensuring environmental security development needs to be carried out in a sustainable manner. The idea is to include concept of environment in the development discourse.

The United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change and the protection of biodiversity are few measures to preserve the environment (Baker, 2006:37). Another measure taken was the Kyoto Protocol in December 1997 to prevent climate change. The energy consumption is reduced by 5.2%. Environment security becomes important as preservation of ecosystem is pivotal for saving future human lives. Development should be carried in an environment friendly way and sustainable development tried to do that. There are sharp differences of opinion among advanced and backward countries with regard to environmental laws and economic progress. Sustainable development as a strategy includes questions of carrying developmental as well as protection of environment.

### The debate around development and environment between developing and developed countries

With the emergence of sustainable development since the time of the Rio Earth Summit the whole notion of maintaining a balance between development and environmental protection became the focal point of debate. The argument put forward by the developing countries was the fact that the per capita consumption is higher in the developed states than the developing states. The lead role should be taken by the developed states in order to reduce the overall consumption. The point of concern is that, if the developing countries reduce their overall consumption mainly in the 1990s then their economic development will be hampered. This led to the creation of the North-South divide. From these environmental conferences one can view the sharp differences of opinions between the developed and developing countries. The difference is that the developing states were of the opinion that the developed countries degraded the

environment for economic development. The developing states if they follow the same path then development will be hampered. The debate revolved around the idea that if the developed countries followed a wrong path why would the developing state follow it and degrade the environment further. The alternate ways should be adopted. The predominant question remained whether the developing countries should follow the footsteps of the developed countries.

The debate continues till date as to whether sustainable plans can be applied keeping in mind development. The combating of threats like climate change, emissions of greenhouse gases Co<sub>2</sub>, No<sub>2</sub>, CFC along with indiscriminate use of air conditioners and use of refrigerators leading to increased rise in temperature, depletion of ozone layer leading to skin cancer becomes significant. The developed nations are economically preponderant hence leading to more devastation. The industrial activities as a part of modern economic activities leads to massive generation of greenhouse gases that aggravates climate change. The immediate need of the hour is reduction in overall consumption which is escalating at an alarming rate.

Ten years after the developing countries like India, Brazil, China equally contributed to global warming as the energy consumption level increased. Here they followed the same path as the developed countries as is needed for economic development. Without protecting the environment the survival of mankind is very much difficult. The overall level of energy consumption in the atmosphere is increasing having a catastrophic consequence on the environment like global warming, melting of ice caps and submergence of low lying areas. There is an island called 'Purbasa' in the Sundarban areas which both India and Bangladesh claim to be their own. The New Moore Island is claimed by India to be her own. There were several negotiations that covered disputed ownership. Due to environmental degradation the New Moore Island submerged in the Sundarban areas. Environmental security is different from ecological security. Ecological security is the security of the entire biosphere that is human and living creatures. Environmental security is the notion of environmental degradation and how it affects the 'human' lives. The threat to biodiversity includes climate change, submersion of Sundarbans and disappearance of whole population of Royal Bengal Tiger in West Bengal, India which encapsulates wide and comprehensive spectrum.

#### **The notion of environmental security and protection of the environment in the wake of economic development and the role of non state actors in this regard**

John Bennett, an eminent environmentalist, coined the termed Environmental Security and analyzed the ways of securing environment in the wake of environmental degradation. The question of environmental governance becomes significant here.

The ways of operationalizing these strategies relating to sustainable development becomes pivotal notion of concern. The mechanism of environmental governance can be performed by the state or any non – state based actors. In many cases non state actors can play significant roles as far as matters of environmental governance are concerned. The transnational civil society groups like the Green Peace or the domestic civil society groups works on environmental security, researches, revolts puts pressure on government in case of environmental security. Environmental governance policies tries to protect overall well being of the environment. Non state actors are equally important as pressure groups to influence environmental security policies. The states which wan to continue economic development in global capitalism, the question remains whether they can adopt policies of environmental security and can the balance be ever maintained. The question revolves around the fact that whether the state would be at all able to follow policies based on environmental protection. The concerns always remains that how to ensure environmental security in the wake of economic modernization and urbanization alongside environmental governance becomes important. The central question remains whether states can pursue economic development along with balancing sustainable development strategies. How much environmental laws are protected in ground reality specially in developing states like India becomes great cause of concern.

#### **The impact of globalization on the ideas of sustainable development and environment and the precedence of environmental or trade laws**

The paper focuses on the ways in which economic globalization has its impact on environmental security. Globalization as a process started from the 1980s and gained momentum from the 1990s. The process which started from the decade of 1980 is merged by integration of markets and economy throughout the world. It is an outcome of proliferation of global capital. The process of economic globalization has given rise to emergence of 'Global Economy'. International economy is that economy where we find separate existence of different national economies. Global economy is that which is the sum total of all national economies. In global economies it is difficult to separate different national economies from global economies. Globalization is marked by integration of national economic proliferation of global capital.

For instance stock exchange is crashing in Tokyo's stock market impact of that financial crisis will not be limited to Japanese economy alone but impact will be felt in London, Singapore, New York. The economic crisis is spilling over to the

entire world. The difference between what constitutes local and global is also getting blurred (Baker, 2006:52). This gives rise to 'Glocal' where it is difficult to differentiate due to global economy. Important consequence is that state shave increasingly lost their control to take decisions on their own in matters relating to the economy. The process of economic globalization has given rise to supranational capitalism which is not fixed at any territorial location where capital can move freely throughout the world. The important role of Technological revolution or the World Wide Web internet services and other communication facilities led to news to travel instantaneously all over the world within moments (Sachs, 2015:34).

Due to the internet facility it is possible to transfer capital from one place to another within few moments. (credit, debit cards, internet banking) The World Wide Web started in 1989. Supraterritorial capital not only has impact on domestic economy but also on environment. It is difficult for sovereign states to regulate supraterritorial capital. This leads to investment and if capital is decreasing they can take money and invest in another country. Capital can move from place to place but labour cannot as it requires passport or visa. The process is more advanced by World Trade Organization (GATT) in 1995 to promote free trade which accelerates globalization (Gallagher, 2009:294). There are many multilateral organizations like in India and they have to abide by norms and it is seen that any multilateral trade rule or local national trade rule contradicts multilateral or local environmental rule between the two, the question is which one is to be given preference. The point is whether it is possible for any state to overcome local trade laws and prefer local or national environment laws (Gallagher, 2009:282). Many states cannot give preference to environment laws due to their own condition like India has long coastline, marine ecology and the parliament had enacted Coastal regulatory management Act (CRMA). The permanent construction needs to be done keeping distance from the coast. Developments on coastline have rampantly hampered Mandarmani. Hotels for tourism have violated 75% the regulations. The Kolkata High court has given verdict to close those hotels but nothing has materialized. Tourism is needed for economy but the ecology is largely disrupted.

The political reasons become important here and in case of environment and trade laws economic laws are given much importance. From the analysis it can be said that governance means the capacity to make things done without legal competence to command. Globalization has an impact on environment and environmental governance means preserving environment from various threats which endangers life on this planet. Civil society agencies work in this regard. States are becoming inefficient in doing productive works. In the developing states like India the condition is worse as rules of environment are not enforced properly. The impact on environment due to profit making activities is taken to be massively detrimental. Trade laws are prevailing over anything else. Many agencies are relocating units from developed to developing states as labour is cheaper. Globalization has posed a threat to protection of the environment. Challenge to governance is felt as developing states are incapable to make eco-friendly laws and climate change, use of resources and environmental degradation at large results in huge destruction. Developing countries are facing an adverse impact as issues need to be addressed and globalization has made it challenging for developing states.

The research question revolves on the notion of economic development and protection of the environment along with the questions of impact of globalization in this regard. The objective of this paper centers around the debate on environment security and the aspect of development that is contested among developed and developing nations. The question focused on is the ways of implementing sustainable development and the process in which sustainable development is trying to bridge the gap between development and environment. The role of the non state actors in this regard and the precedence of ecological and trade laws are important to analyze. The paper is based on descriptive, analytical and exploratory narrative based on qualitative method of analysis.

In the concluding section it can be said that, the needs of the future generations along with present ones must be met, the ways in which energy consumption can be reduced and renewable energy could be used. Nations all over the globe should stand together in combating threats due to climate change, the emissions leading to global warming and pollution at all spheres like industrial wastes emanating from chemical fertilizers even radioactive pollution, along with biodiversity threats needs major attention.

Sustainable methods should include waste recycling and ecology is harmed tremendously by economic activities like tourism. Various non state actors have primarily led many protest marches or demonstrations against climate changes and threats like deforestation, many Indian climate change activists or international environmentalists have tried to combat the issues like Disha Ravi, Greta Thunberg, Licypriya Kangujam voiced opinions against plastic use and conserving environment.

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